

# **\*\*ATTENTION\*\***

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## COOPERATIVE ROAD MANAGEMENT

### Roads and Wildlife

Roads facilitate the trips of countless thousands to get to the backcountry each year to hunt, fish, gather berries and mushrooms, take photographs and generally enjoy the forest. Roads also allow managers to efficiently move commercial products such as timber, firewood and minerals. They make it easier to control fires, pests and the spread of tree diseases.

Increased road access to Washington's forests provide increased wildlife-related recreational opportunities unless access becomes excessive. Then, recreational opportunities may ultimately decrease.

How many miles of forest road are enough? For each mile of road, at least four acres are directly removed from productive habitat. In addition, although some elk and deer will use areas next to road traffic, most will not. Studies in Washington and elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest have shown that most big game animals avoided active roads by at least one-quarter

mile, and some moved as much as four miles in response to traffic on roads.

Intermittent, recreational road use can be disturbing to other kinds of wildlife. Large birds of prey, such as eagles, may abandon a nest with young if harassed during the brooding period.

Traffic causes stress (an energy drain) as well as movement or flight. Disturbance during certain times of the year, such as the winter and spring periods for big game, can literally mean the difference between life and death, between production of young or failure to reproduce.

Poorly designed forest roads can cause increased sediment and fine organic debris in streams, changes in water quality, formation of physical barriers to the movement of adult and juvenile fish.

There can be people-related problems with increasing public access. Landowners cite higher road maintenance costs, increased risk of wildfires, increased vandalism of equipment and wood theft. Also, there is a direct relationship

between road densities and big game vulnerability to both legal and illegal harvest.

As road densities increase, hunter opportunity can actually decrease if buck or bull ratios are low and higher escapement is needed for optimum reproduction.

### The Road Management Program

In 1980, the Department of Wildlife began developing the Cooperative Road Management Program in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Natural Resources and private timber corporations and landowners. In most of these areas, roads have been posted *closed* to vehicular traffic.

In other areas the Green Dot System is in place. Under this system, selected roads are posted *open* with the remaining roads in the area closed. Posts with four-inch green reflectors on them invite the forest user to drive on some roads. In these special "green dot" areas, *roads without a*

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green dot are closed to motor vehicles, but may still be used by people on foot, bicycle or horseback. The green dot posts are supplemented by large information boards at major points of entry into the area and by free maps showing the open road systems.

Basic goals of the Cooperative Road Management Program include:

- Reduce disturbance of wildlife during critical periods;
- Reduce siltation of lakes and streams;
- Reduce crowding of hunters, fishermen and other visitors;
- Reduce poaching of wildlife and fish;
- Increase buck and bull escapement;
- Minimize landowner/sportsmen conflicts.

The 1990-91 program included 59 Cooperative Road Management Areas covering over a million acres. Not all of the roads in all of the areas are closed; some remain open in particular areas for basic access.

Maps and more detailed information on closure dates will be available each September at any of the Department of Wildlife regional offices, the WDW Olympia headquarters, and at the Umatilla and Okanogan National Forests.

Try one out!

You may have to park the car or truck and walk into the forest for some birdwatching, photography, hiking, hunting or fishing but it's one way to share in the management of wildlife and habitat.

Let's hear from you!

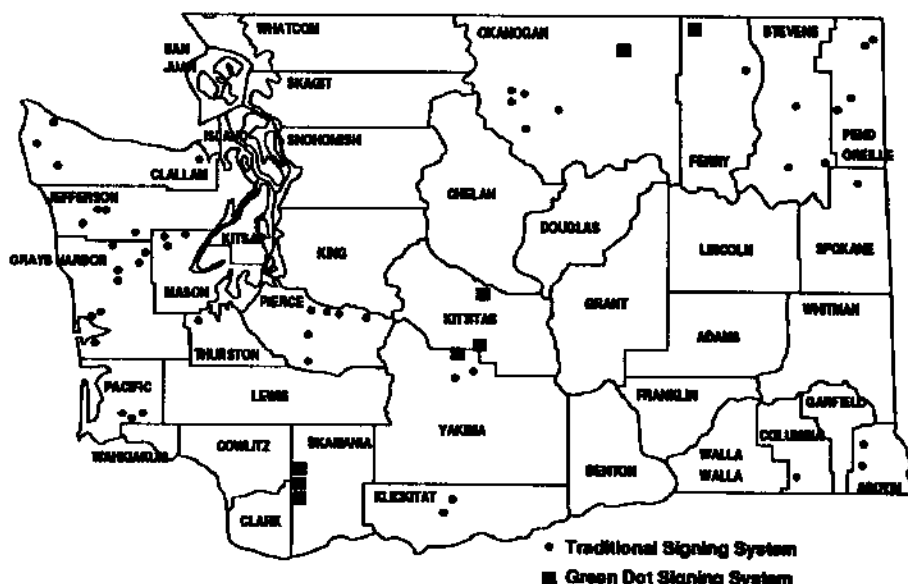
We want to know what you think, what you have experienced, and what directions you prefer to see us take.

## THANK YOU Cooperating Landowners:

Anderson and Middleton  
ANE Forest Products Co.  
U.S. Forest Service  
Department of Natural Resources  
Plum Creek Timber Co.  
Champion International  
Longview Fibre  
Weyerhaeuser Co.  
Boise Cascade Corp.  
Cavenham Forest Industries

Kayser-Davenport  
Simpson Timber Co.  
Crown Zellerbach Corp.  
ITT Rayonier Inc.  
Mayr Brothers  
Grays Harbor County  
M.R.G.C.  
John Hancock Life Insurance Co.  
Colville Confederated Tribes

## 1990 Cooperative Road Management Summary



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